



# PORT OF MIAMI TUNNEL PROJECT

## FDOT Sponsorship - Fact Sheet

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The Florida Department of Transportation has been a sponsor of the Port of Miami Tunnel Study and subsequent Project for many years. FDOT District 6 conducted the Project Development & Environment (PD&E) Study which began in 1989. It concluded in December 2000 when **Location Design Concept Acceptance** (LDCA) was granted by the Federal Highway Administration to the tunnel alternative connecting the Port of Miami to the interstate highway system by way of Watson Island and the MacArthur Causeway Bridge.

That study examined several tunnel and bridge alternatives. It was initiated before the present high-level fixed-span bridge opened in 1990, as it was already known that additional access to the Port of Miami was greatly needed. However, sufficient federal, state and local funds have not been available to begin construction.

A second Port access via a tunnel has become an urgent need in face of increasingly strong competition. The tunnel will 1) provide a direct connection between the Port, I-395 and I-95, 2) keep the Port competitive by improving the flow of traffic in and out, and 3) decongest downtown Miami streets.

The Port is Miami-Dade County's second most powerful economic engine after Miami International Airport, generating \$13 billion in revenue and directly or indirectly providing 93,000 jobs. Sixty-eight percent of the cargo it receives stays within Miami-Dade County.

Beginning in 2003, the Port of Miami Tunnel was reexamined by Florida's Turnpike Enterprise, which operates like a private sector business under the umbrella of FDOT. Because it is the state's largest revenue-producing asset, it was thought that Florida's Turnpike might be able to put together the funding needed for the project.

However, even as that study advanced by gathering data related to Port operations and construction, utilities, existing structures and roadways, the geology of the ship channel, mapping and environmental issues and preliminary construction drawings, funding for such a huge project remained a question.

As a result, the Port of Miami Tunnel came under the aegis of District 6 once again. Now the project is being developed through a public-private partnership involving FDOT, Miami-Dade County, the City of Miami, other stakeholders and a *concessionaire*. In mid to late April 2007, one of three teams responding to an FDOT Request for Proposals will be awarded a 35-year contract (concession) to design, build, finance, operate and maintain the tunnel. The state will make availability payments for its use.

The primary objectives for offering the project as a public-private partnership are to 1) achieve the most efficient possible design, construction and maintenance of the project, 2) ensure a high level of tunnel quality, safety, security and service, and 3) equitably share risks with a capable private partner.